

VZCZCXRO2266

OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHSI #0908/01 1321513

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 121513Z MAY 09

FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1554

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0220

RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4838

RUEHUNV/UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 4030

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 000908

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KBTS](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: EU DISCUSSIONS REGARDING EUMM'S FUTURE

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary and comment. According to EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) Head of Mission Haber, EU member states do not have a clear vision of the EUMM in the future. The mission will almost surely be extended for a year, but some elements in the EU would prefer to see it end at that point. Assuming the OSCE's closure, they have a vague notion that the UN would then take over monitoring duties for all of Georgia, including both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Haber suggested that EU member states were content to allow the EU itself to take the lead on Georgia issues and avoid active bilateral engagement with Russia on Georgia, an approach which reduces pressure on Russia and consequently on South Ossetian de facto authorities. He said he was pleased to sense that Georgia, feeling supported by the EU's continued presence and firm non-recognition policy, was less paranoid about Russian aggression and more open to creative approaches to engagement. Considering questions about the UN presence and the EU's long-term commitment, however, Haber suggested it was worth thinking about the long-term structure of protecting Georgia's security and territorial integrity. As we think about the way forward, we will need to track all these issues closely with the EU itself and individual member states. Interestingly, key EU member state Ambassadors in Tbilisi have cautioned us several times that Haber is more concerned about the EU's long-term presence than most member states. End summary and comment.

¶2. (C) In a May 5 meeting with the Ambassador, EUMM Head of Mission Hansjoerg Haber raised a number of issues on the future of the EU, as well as the overall international presence, in Georgia. He reported that EU High Representative Solana had rather abruptly cut off recent discussions in Brussels on the topic, as he did not want to focus on EUMM's future until after a decision was made on a new UN mandate. Although Haber thought that holding off on the discussion until June was acceptable, he warned that there was sentiment among some (unnamed) EU member states that the EU should extend the EUMM for only one more year, then allow the UN to take over. An assumption underlying this attitude is that the OSCE mission to Georgia will close, and the UN will somehow be in a position to take over for the OSCE in South Ossetia. Haber said that High Representative Solana, who is somewhat under the influence of the EU's representation in New York, may also prefer to cede leadership on Georgia to the UN. He said it would therefore be important for the EU to engage in a serious conversation about the EUMM's future after the UN mandate is resolved.

¶3. (C) Haber noted that some (again unnamed) EU states were also content to cede leadership on Georgia policy to the EU and avoid active bilateral engagement with Russia on Georgia. He raised the example of the EUMM's MOU with the Georgian Ministry of Defense. The EUMM has made a series of public

statements about the MOU, praising Georgia for its consistent adherence, while explicitly noting the lack -- and the potential usefulness -- of a similar agreement covering the other side of the administrative boundaries. Individual EU states, however, have not followed suit. Haber warned that Qstates, however, have not followed suit. Haber warned that this lack of bilateral engagement reduced the pressure on Russia -- and by extension on South Ossetian de facto authorities.

¶4. (C) Haber contrasted some of the attitudes within the EU with those in Georgia. He was pleased to note that the situation on the ground has improved somewhat, with the Georgian government no longer paranoid about additional Russian military action. He also considered Minister for Reintegration Yakobashvili's seemingly sincere discussions about the possibility of engagement with the breakaway regions as positive. Although the EUMM's lack of access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia was a primary issue in the first months of the mission's operation, Haber no longer receives constant questions about when the monitors will get in. He thought Georgia had become comfortable with the combination of the EU's firm policy of non-recognition of the two breakaway regions and its monitoring mission, even to the point of not being overly concerned about the OSCE's future. He even thought Georgia's tough line in the UN negotiations was enabled by its faith in the EUMM. Nevertheless, this attitude on the part of the Georgians assumes that the EUMM will be here for the long haul -- and, as Haber pointed out, this assumption may not be well-founded.

¶5. (C) Although Haber admitted that the security environment

TBILISI 00000908 002 OF 002

has improved, he suggested that purely military circumstances made up only about 60 percent of overall stability -- with status issues, which of course remain completely unresolved, making up the remainder. On that note, Haber suggested that Russia has adopted the practice of ignoring what it has agreed to. He also reported that Foreign Minister Vashadze told him recently that Russia has a consistent strategy of moving itself into the position of mediator, rather than party to the conflict.

COMMENT, PART 1: NOTHING IS SETTLED

¶6. (C) Haber requested the meeting with the Ambassador, something he rarely does, to deliver the above messages, so they are worth taking seriously. Furthermore, Haber travels to Brussels frequently to consult with EU leadership, and his sense of the mood there is at least credible. In addition to the uncertain future of the OSCE and UN missions in Georgia, according to Haber, the EU is also unsure about a long-term commitment to the EUMM in supporting Georgia's territorial integrity. Although, as Haber rightly pointed out, the focus right now should be on the OSCE and UN negotiations, it will be important to track the EU's attitude closely, especially if the OSCE and/or UN missions are blocked. Whenever Haber raises these points in the presence of EU Ambassadors, however, as he has done on several occasions at the weekly EUMM briefings for the diplomatic corps, several key EU Ambassadors have approached us quietly to caution that this is a particular concern of Ambassador Haber rather than a problem for the EU or EU member states.

COMMENT, PART 2: THE EU HAS ITS ROLE, BUT SO DO MEMBER STATES

¶7. (C) Haber's comments about the willingness of individual EU member states to yield to the EU on Georgia policy -- and their consequent unwillingness to tackle Georgia issues head-on with Russia -- are especially telling. Although the EU clearly has a very important role to play, especially in sponsoring the EUMM, its member states do too. So far Russia, and in turn the Abkhaz and South Ossetians, have suffered very little from their ongoing flouting of the cease-fire, even with the EUMM, OSCE and UN all providing

consistent evidence of those violations. Effective promotion of U.S. policy, especially in regard to Russia's role in Georgia, will require not only coordination with the EU, but encouragement of its component members to engage actively on a bilateral basis.

TEFFT